

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #68-6 Building Date: ca. 1897

Building Name: Chambers Funeral Home

Location: 5801 Cleveland Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland

Private/Commercial/Occupied/Excellent/Accessible

Description:

The Chambers Funeral home is a three-story frame building, originally three bays by four bays with mansard roof (ca. 30'x35'), with a two-bay two-story gable-roofed addition to the south. Entrance was originally through the central bay of the three-bay north facade, sheltered by a one-story porch which ran the length of this main north facade. Dormers with shallow pediments pierced the mansard roof at third level, above the windows on the first and second stories. The building has been greatly altered since 1935 when it became a funeral home. The north porch has been enclosed and a projecting columned entrance has been built onto its central bay. The first-story openings on the west facade have been completely changed: the original four bays have been rebuilt adding a central opening with double doors and fanlight, sheltered by a columned portico, while the two openings flanking this entrance on each side have been moved slightly outward so that they are no longer aligned with the windows above them; these four first-story windows are now round-headed, with shallow keystone surrounds. In addition, the third dormer on the west facade has been doubled. The foundation of the building is of brick, there is vinyl siding over the original boards, and the roof is of slate.

Significance:

The Chambers Funeral home is housed in one of the earliest dwellings constructed by the Riverdale Park Company in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although the lines of the original structure are easily recognizable, the building has been so greatly altered that very little of its original fabric and character remains. In the late 1880's, the Riverdale Park Company, a New York real estate syndicate, bought up much of the Calverts' Riversdale estate, and in 1889 began laying out residential lots for the planned suburb of Riverdale. In 1895 the company sold to Marion Wicks and his wife four unimproved lots; within two years, there was constructed on the lots a sizeable three-story mansard-roofed frame house, with a front porch and rear wing, assessed at \$1500 in value. In the next three decades, the house was the residence of the Severe, Magruder and Porton families, and in 1935 was sold to William W. Chambers, who converted it into one of a chain of funeral homes. Although it represents one of the larger and more impressive houses built in the early years of the Riverdale Park development, the Chambers Funeral Home is so altered that it is only a suggestion of its original historic character.

Acreage: ca. 1 acre

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Marion Wicks House

and/or common Chambers Funeral Home

## 2. Location

street & number 5801 Cleveland Avenue ☐ not for publicationcity, town Riverdale ☐ vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county PG

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name W.W. Chambers Co., Inc.

street &amp; number 5801 Cleveland Avenue telephone no.: 699-5500

city, town Riverdale, Md. state and zip code 20737

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P.G. Co. Courthouse liber 2221

street &amp; number Main Street folio 564

city, town Upper Marlboro state Md.

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title P.G. Co. Inventory of Historic Sites

date 1974 ☐ federal ☐ state ☒ county ☐ local

pository for survey records History Division, MNCPPC

city, town Riverdale, state Md.

## 7. Description

Survey No. P.G.#68-6

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Chambers Funeral home is a three-story frame building, originally three bays by four bays with mansard roof (ca. 30'x35'), with a two-bay two-story gable-roofed addition to the south. Entrance was originally through the central bay of the three-bay north facade, sheltered by a one-story porch which ran the length of this main north facade. Dormers with shallow pediments pierced the mansard roof at third level, above the windows on the first and second stories.

The building has been greatly altered since 1935 when it became a funeral home. Windows, originally 2/2 double hung sash, are now 6/6. The north porch has been enclosed and a projecting columned entrance has been built onto its central bay. The first-story openings on the west facade have been completely changed: the original four bays have been rebuilt adding a central opening with double doors and fanlight, sheltered by a columned portico, while the two openings flanking this entrance on each side have been moved slightly outward so that they are no longer aligned with the windows above them; these four first-story windows are now round-headed, with shallow keystone surrounds. In addition, the third dormer on the west facade has been doubled. The foundation of the building is of brick, there is vinyl siding over the original boards, and the roof is of slate.

A photograph from the Riverdale Park Real Estate brochure (ca. 1905) shows two central chimneys with corbelled caps which undoubtedly served fireplaces between front and back parlors on both sides of a central hall. These chimneys have been removed and the partitions between interior spaces have been greatly changed to accommodate the current use of the building.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. #68-6

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1897

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Chambers Funeral home is housed in one of the earliest dwellings constructed by the Riverdale Park Company in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although the lines of the original structure are easily recognizable, the building has been so greatly altered that very little of its original fabric and character remains.

In the late 1880's, the Riverdale Park Company, a New York real estate syndicate, bought up much of the Calverts' Riversdale estate, and in 1889 began laying out residential lots for the planned suburb of Riverdale.<sup>1</sup> In 1895 the company sold to Marion Wicks and his wife four unimproved lots (#7, #8, #9 and #15, adjoining) in Block #52 just south of Dupont Circle on the Baltimore Pike. Within two years, there was constructed on the lots a sizeable three-story mansard-roofed frame house, with a front porch and rear wing, assessed at \$1500 in value.<sup>2</sup> Wicks defaulted in his mortgage payments, the mortgage was foreclosed and the house and lots were sold to Joseph A. Blundon, attorney for the developers, in 1900. Blundon subsequently sold the property to William and Katie Severe. In the next three decades, the house was the residence of the Severe, Magruder and Porton families, and in 1935 was sold to William W. Chambers, who converted it into one of a chain of funeral homes.<sup>3</sup>

Although it represents one of the larger and more impressive houses built in the early years of the Riverdale Park development, the Chambers Funeral Home is so altered that it is only a suggestion of its original historic character.

<sup>1</sup> Prince George's County Deed JWB #5:474

<sup>2</sup> Prince George's County Deed JWB #32:533; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1890-1900; Prince George's County Plat JWB #5:475; Real estate brochure, Riverdale Park Company.

<sup>3</sup> Prince George's County Deeds JWB #32:543; #3:501; #21:145; #84:162; #175:463; #250:85; #353:244; #422:371. Equity #2693.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. P.G.#68-6

P.G. Co. Deeds: JWB#32:543; #3:501; #21:145; #84:162; #175:463;  
#250:85; #353:244; #422:371; Equity #2693  
P.G. Co. Tax Assessments; Riverdale Park Brochure, ca. 1905

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Washington East

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl, Research Historian

organization Historic Preservation Commission date September 1984

street & number c/o County Planning, CAB telephone 952-3521

city or town Upper Marlboro, state Md.

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM

for the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

166-6  
P. 9. 06  
1700664511

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>					
COMMON: Chambers Funeral Home					
AND/OR HISTORIC:					
<b>2. LOCATION</b>					
STREET AND NUMBER: 5801 Cleveland Avenue					
CITY OR TOWN: Riverdale					
STATE Maryland			COUNTY: Prince George's		
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	
		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____	
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>					
OWNER'S NAME: Chambers Funeral Home					
STREET AND NUMBER: 5801 Cleveland Avenue					
CITY OR TOWN: Riverdale			STATE: Maryland		
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Prince George's County Courthouse					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN: Upper Marlboro			STATE: Maryland		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>					
TITLE OF SURVEY: None					
DATE OF SURVEY: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house is a 2½ story frame building with arched windows on the ground floor and a mansard roof. The entrance porch has four columns and an arched ceiling under the pedimented roof. There is a leaded fanlight over the doorway.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

19. 01. 6

PERIOD (Check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

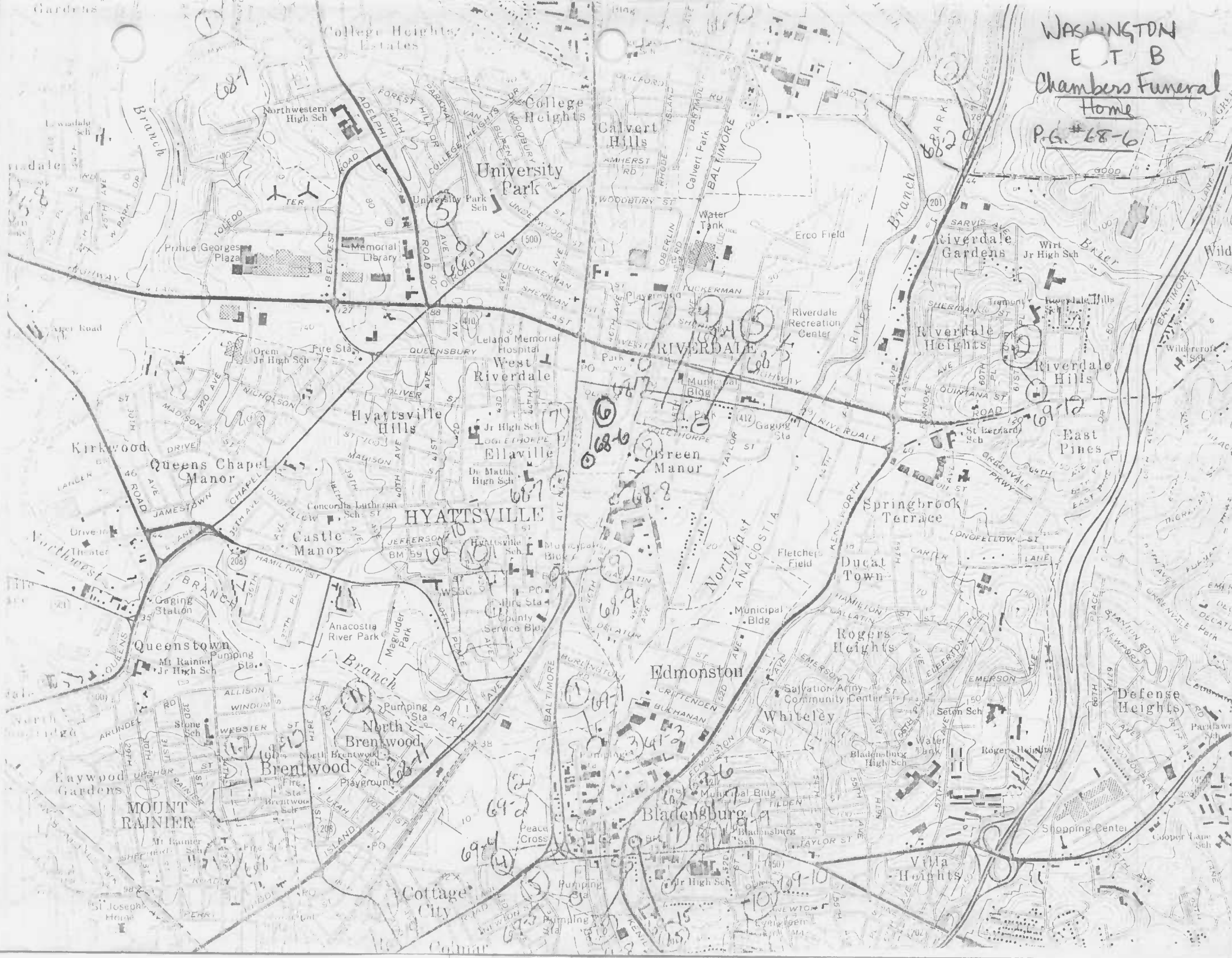
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



PG # 68-6





P.G. #68-6

Chambers Funeral Home

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

September 1984

North elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD

# *Chambers*

ONE OF THE  
LARGEST UNDERTAKERS IN THE WORLD



P.G. #68-6

Chambers Funeral Home

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

September 1984

West elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



P.G. #68-6

Chambers Funeral Home

Prince Geprge's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

September 1984

Southwest 3/4 elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD





NAME CHAMBERS FUNERAL HOME

LOCATION 5801 CLEVELAND AVE., RIVERDALE, Md.

FACADE W

PHOTO TAKEN 3/9/73 M DWYER